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Queen's University at Kingston

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Father of Sir Richard J. Cartwright

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THE
FIRST AND LAST WORDS
OF
A PASTOR TO HIS PEOPLE.

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MDCCCXLIII.

TO THE CONGREGATION OF ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH.

IN offering, as a parting gift, to the Congregation amongst whom for twelve years he laboured, and in whose service he has been worn and spent, the last words ever uttered amongst them by him, who has now gone to his rest ; I need not to bespeak favour or indulgence.

They are words of simplicity and truth ; they were preached among you with deep emotion—they were preached in pain and suffering—and to many present they sounded then, as they have since proved to be, the dying words of your Pastor. Let the heart searching enquiries therein made, now sound in your ears as a voice from his grave—as a solemn appeal from that World of Spirits into which he has entered. And may the Spirit of God bring home to your hearts with power these last words of your Minister—that in that day when you again meet him face to face, they may not testify against any.

H. C.

June 5th, 1843.

EXTRACTS *from the Introductory Sermon of the* REV. R.
D. CARTWRIGHT, *preached before the Congregation*
of ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, on his appointment as
Assistant Minister of Kingston ; March 20th, 1831.

"Let a man so account of us, as of the Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the mysteries of God."—1st Ep. to Cor. 4th chap. 1st verse.

VARIOUS are the means employed by a gracious Saviour to encourage the weak disciple—reclaim and rouse the thoughtless and indifferent professor—and awaken the hardened sinner to a sense of his state. The Holy Spirit, in its efforts to kindle faith within the heart, is not confined to any definite rule; still in every age its most prominent instruments have been the Christian Ministers. They are the ordained means appointed by God to convince man of the danger of that spiritual indolence in which the soul is ever too willing to repose; they are the appointed teachers whose duty it is plainly to shew the folly of relying on vague notions of divine mercy, and supposed Baptismal privileges; who are bound to lead men seriously to enquire into the real demands of the Gospel, and the method of salvation therein revealed; whose warning voice must rouse all to vigilance in working out their salvation; and persuade them to try and examine themselves by the law and the testimony, so that they may be able to give a reasonable answer of the hope that is in them. My brethren, this is the nature of the com-

mission with which we are charged as Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the mysteries of God. How responsible the situation ! How weighty the charge ! How sacred the connection that subsists between a Minister of Christ and the Flock of which he has the oversight ! Other connections are dissolved by death, but the influence of this will extend beyond the grave ; it will be remembered when every other is forgotten, and its effects will be felt one way or other throughout eternity. *And such is the connection which is now to commence between you and myself* ; it is a solemn and affecting consideration both to you and to me to contemplate it in all its consequences, so awfully interesting to our everlasting state to carry our thoughts onward to the consummation of all things, when enquiry shall be made (by Him whom no one can deceive) whether the Minister has been faithful to his trust ? Whether the Flock has profited by his labour ?

Do I then unduly magnify my office when I assert, that it is the most important to which a man can possibly be called. Many I know will tell you that it is our profession, our business ; that we are paid to preach just as the lawyer is paid for pleading for his client—the physician for attending and relieving his patient, and that therefore it is our interest. My brethren, I admit that it is our profession ; we publicly profess at our ordination, never to cease our care and diligence till we have done all that lieth in us to bring to Christ those who are intrusted to our care. True, it is our business to teach every man the value of his soul, and warn him of the danger to which it is exposed by sin. Nay more, I allow that it is for our own interest that we preach—that we have in it a deep personal concern : “ For thus saith the Lord—I have set

thee as a watchman unto the house of Israel ; therefore, when I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die, if thou doest not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand.” Is it matter of wonder, then, with this plain denunciation before our eyes, that we conceive it our business and interest to declare plainly the whole counsel of God ? But do not believe, as they would insinuate who call it our professional business, that we feel nothing ourselves at the issue of our labours. Do not believe that we grieve not when the warnings of God are in vain—that we rejoice not when they are listened to. No, it is our greatest comfort. Believe me, there are moments when a sense of the awful responsibility we have assumed—when the contemplation of that strict account, of every single soul entrusted to our charge, which we must render unto God—affects us deeply. It is then that we feel our own insufficiency, and the vast importance of our office—it is then that we feel the need of support and consolation : and where are we to look ? Our first hope is in Him whose instruments we are. We look with confidence to Him, in full assurance that He who has sent us will, if we be but sincere, give us power and ability to perform our duty : we know that His grace is amply sufficient. Our next is the comfort and encouragement which flows from a belief that our labours are not altogether in vain—that we are instrumental in promoting the salvation of souls—that we shall be enabled, with St. Paul, to thank God, “ that when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God, which worketh effectually in them that believe.” “ For what is our hope or joy, or

crown of rejoicing ? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming ? For ye are our glory and joy.”

* * * * *

The object of every minister should be, to endeavour to persuade his flock that he is interested for them. *My brethren, by God's help I will endeavour to obtain this testimony.* In the meanwhile, all I ask is that you believe me sincere and earnest—that I really wish to promote your eternal interest. I expect no more than this at present ; and this I have a right to expect, till you have cause to think otherwise. I have come among you with the determination, as far as is in my power, of continuing with you. *I enter upon my charge in the hope that I shall never leave you ;* but that I shall be permitted to labour among you, until the day when I shall be called to account ; and I confess I think myself happy that my lot is likely to be cast in a place endeared to me by the ties of early recollections, and among so many who have known me from my youth up. I look with confidence for your assistance and support in my ministry ; and indulge the hope, that, by the *blessing of God, I shall have the comfort of knowing that my labour has not been in vain.*

And now, brethren, in the presence of Him before whom we must all ere long appear, let me solemnly and affectionately entreat your prayers in my behalf. Pray for yourselves, and for me. For yourselves, that you may profit by my ministry ; for me, that I may have my conversation honest among you, so that, after having preached to others, I may not be a cast away ;—“ *that I*

may speak the truth boldly, as I ought to speak, yet in love ;—that I may rightly proclaim that great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh ;” so that when the awful hour arrives, which is to fix the destiny of our souls for ever, we may have cause to thank God for the connection this day begun ; and when the Saviour shall require at my hands an account of the souls over which He has appointed me to watch, I may be able to say, “Lord, of those whom thou gavest me, I have lost none.”

PREACHED *before the Congregation of St. GEORGE'S*
CHURCH, *Januay 29th, 1843.*

“To sit on my right hand and on my left, is not mine to give ; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.”—Part of the 23rd verse of the 20th chap. of St. Matthew.

THE words of the text are taken from the 2nd Lesson of last Sunday morning ; and, like many places of Holy Scripture, are probably listened to without duly weighing the full purport and meaning of the lesson they convey. It is my intention to offer some remarks upon the passage, which, when duly weighed, will be found well deserving our attention. The occasion which caused our Lord to give utterance to these words was a request made by the mother of James and John, or by her in conjunction with her two sons, that the chief places of honour should be reserved for them in that kingdom which they supposed to be approaching. This request seems to have been dictated by worldly ambition, and the other disciples undoubtedly understood it to be a desire, on the part of two brothers, to be exalted above them ; for we read that, when the ten heard it, they were moved with *indignation* against the two brethren, or, as it is in the parallel place in Mark, they began to be *much displeased* with James and John. Our blessed Lord, discovering this feeling of indignation, repressed it at once. “He called

the twelve unto Him, and said : Ye know that the Princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them ; but it shall not be so among you ; but whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant ; even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Let us observe in such scenes as these the mind of Christ ; let us not pass over this instance without confessing, that our Lord carried out in his own example and daily practice the precept he had previously given, "Blessed are the Peace Makers, for they shall be called the Children of God." But our chief concern is to consider the meaning of our Lord in his reply to the request of the sons of Zebedee, "To sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." If you turn to the verse in your Bible you will see that the words "*it shall be given to them,*" are printed in a different type from the rest of the passage, this shews that the words have been inserted by our translators, and that they are not in the original Greek. It is to be regretted that these words have been put in, they are not only not necessary, but they have the effect of altering the meaning. The passage is perfectly intelligible without the addition, "To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give but to them for whom it has been prepared by my Father." My brethren, these words plainly declare that heaven is not to be promiscuously thrown open ; they imply that future happiness in the world to come can only be given to a certain class, and that our Lord himself can bestow it on no others but those for whom it has been prepared. I wish you to weigh

well this deduction. Is not the inference a correct one? Does it not follow directly from our Lord's reply to James and John? If so, it is surely an important inquiry, who they are for whom these things have been prepared. Is there any place in Scripture that can give us a clue to a question so momentous? Yes, my brethren, Scripture does furnish us with a clue to our inquiry. Scripture does plainly declare who they are for whom heavenly happiness and honour have been prepared. Connect this place of Scripture with that other place in this same Gospel, where our Lord has given an account of the day of Judgment. Compare his words, and see if you cannot find the answer you require: "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom PREPARED for YOU from the foundation of the world: for *I* was an hungered, and ye gave me meat," &c. Compare, my brethren, this place with our text: weigh both together, and you have your enquiry fully answered. Heaven has been prepared for the faithful servants of Christ, and for no other;—for those whose faith in Him has worked by love, the fruit of which has been in all goodness, righteousness, and truth. It is true our Lord has confined his judgment to one class of actions; but observe the principle of the procedure, as he has disclosed it, and you will perceive that on it all depends. To one he speaks

with favour ; but why ? Because “ *I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat,*” &c. To the other He speaks with terrors of judgment ; and why does he do so ? Because “ *I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat,*” &c. In the one case, *Christ was served*—in the other, *Christ was neglected*. This constitutes the all important difference between the two great classes—those who are saved, and those who are lost. Unless we serve Christ here, we shall find, that, although “there are many mansions in His Heavenly Father’s house,” not one has been prepared for us ! I confess, taking this view of our Lord’s answer to James and John, nothing appears to me more calculated to awaken, in every thinking mind, the most serious reflections, both as to their conduct and their hopes. The passage, so viewed, proves how gross are the mistakes which prevail as to the practical nature of the Gospel and the evidence of a true faith, and how utterly delusive all those hopes must, eventually prove which are built on those mistaken views. First: We learn what that faith is which Christ will, at the Judgment day, acknowledge. It is an active, diligent, life-influencing faith—that faith which governed the conduct of St. Paul, when, speaking in defence of himself, he tells the Corinthians, “The love of Christ constraineth me ; because I thus judge, that, if one died for all, then were all dead ; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.” (2nd Cor. v. 14, 15.) This is the Gospel principle of faith : it is the practical application of a belief of Christ’s mercy towards ourselves—to the regulation of our every day habits ; not the cold assent of the understanding merely to truths which are considered

as abstract doctrines. Faith—REAL FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS—MUST PRODUCE LOVE; and love is a principle that will shew itself. We cannot believe all that the Scriptures tell us of ourselves—our corrupt nature, our lost condition—we cannot believe what they reveal of Christ's interposition to save us—and not love Him. We cannot believe these things as we ought—cannot believe ourselves *so* lost, or *so* saved—without loving the Saviour. We may profess a thousand things; but if we really believe in the heart what Christ has done for us, and our need of his redemption, we will shew it. It will *constrain* us, as it did St. Paul, to *live to Him*. You cannot prevent the soul, which loves Christ for what He has done, from shewing that love. He may have little—of silver and gold he may have none—but he will shew that he is the servant of the Lord Jesus. My brethren, *do you love the Lord Jesus Christ?* Be not surprised at the question; but try and answer it. You do. Is it a love in word and in tongue, or in deed and in truth?—for when St. John guards us against the former, it is evident he had witnessed some examples of that shallow sort of love, which was all words. It is evident likewise that St. James had seen instances of a faith which shewed no signs of love—no signs of life. Let us then beware of the same deceit. I ask again, *DO YOU LOVE THE LORD JESUS CHRIST?* Take but the last week: try yourselves by it. What evidence do its hours afford, that you are Christ's servants, and that you have served Him? I wish not to carry on the matter too minutely—to descend to details; but *do you*, in the secrecy of your own hearts, and in the privacy of your own chamber, try honestly to review the last six days; and as each successive hour—

each successive action—comes before you in that review, see what Christ has had to do with either? If *He* has had nothing to do with the manner in which you have spent your time—the objects in which you have been engaged, or the spirit by which you have been influenced—can you be said to love the Lord? Are not our thoughts often on those whom we love, and who love us; and the more so, if absent from us for a season! How necessary—how appropriate the prayer in our Liturgy, “O Lord, who hast prepared for them that love thee such good things as pass man’s understanding, send Thy Holy Spirit, and pour into our hearts such love toward Thee, that we, loving thee above all things, may obtain Thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire, through Christ Jesus.”

2nd. Observe the true Christian character, as the answer of our Lord to James and John, compared with his principle of judgment, reveals it. Is it the mere abstaining from gross sins that qualifies for Heaven? Does the meetness to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light consist in not living as sinfully as some others—the doing no harm to our fellow men, and such like, as so many seem to suppose? Is a man to be accounted safe because he is no drunkard—is not unchaste—is not dishonest? Will a man of mere amiable feelings, who has been influenced by them alone, without regard to the claims of Christ upon his talents—will he be safe? Is it not evident, my brethren, that a place in the heavenly kingdom has not been prepared for that mere negative character; as the only principle there recognised is faith working by love to Christ, so the only character there accepted is the character which that principle engenders. It is the most powerful of all principles where it rules;

and it is the only principle powerful enough to overcome the world, purify the heart, and withstand the devil. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" It must do this for us here in this life; otherwise we shall have neither part nor lot in the kingdom of God. Whence have arisen those mistakes as to the nature and extent of Christian holiness? Whence comes it to pass that so many have the name of Christ, but manifest no likeness to the example he has set them? It must be that they wholly overlook or under-rate this expulsive and expansive principle of faith and love. For what say the Scriptures—that nothing can be done without Christ, without his spirit; and that the fruit of that spirit is the test of true discipleship. They tell us that Christ bore our sins, in his own body, on the tree; that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness; that he died for us that we should live to him. When St. Paul stated to the Corinthians, that he determined to know nothing among them but Christ, and Him crucified, he stated plainly, not merely the subject of his preaching, but the principles of morality which he every where taught, and which should ever prevail in the Church of Christ; holding forth Christ at once as the object of faith to be loved, and the example to be imitated and followed. We are mistaken, my brethren—I feel we are too often—in our standard of moral duty, and in our estimate of Christian obligation. We look not enough to Christ as our example, because we feel not enough our obligations for our redemption; and we feel not this, because we pray not enough to see our sin, our condition naturally, and the glorious liberty by the which he has set us free from the bondage of corruption. The soul that most clearly perceives the

benefit of redemption from this bondage will the most carefully and studiously copy the example of his Redeemer. Much disputing has arisen about faith and good works: they are not and cannot be separate. Perplexities and strifes of words, men who wish to darken counsel, will of course introduce; but the principle on which our Lord declares He will decide at the day of Judgment seems, to my mind, to remove every difficulty. You cannot really believe on the Lord without loving Him for what He has done for your soul. You cannot love Christ without serving Him: poor that service is—astonished they are who are saved, to hear it estimated so highly: “Lord, when saw we *Thee* an hungry and fed *Thee*,” &c. But they did love—they did serve Him; and He is not ashamed to acknowledge and reward it. My dear brethren, let me beseech you to reflect calmly on this scene of final trial. See the value, the importance of living unto Jesus. Oh then try, labour to serve Him: contemplate day by day His claims on your obedience. Pray “Lord increase our faith—increase our love”; for as these increase, you will increase in practical holiness;—because you will labour to be conformed to the image of God’s dear Son. You will try to please him; and you will daily, through His holy Spirit, find that He helps you, till the fruit of a sound faith is seen, and not the mere signs of an empty barren profession.

Lastly. How does our Lord’s answer to James and John, compared with His announcement of the principle of Judgment at the great day, coincide with the hopes formed of a death-bed repentance? If the principle of “faith working by love to Christ,” and leading to Christian holiness—if this be the test on which all depends,

what becomes of the expectation entertained by some that they may leave all to the last? "The expectation of the wicked shall perish." Oh! that men would calmly weigh the moral purpose of the Gospel!—"the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in *this present world*." Christ's people are a "peculiar people, zealous of good works." If this be so—if Christians are to live in this world as the salt of it—what folly to leave all to a dying hour, when there can be no time to try the sincerity either of the repentance or faith which is then professed. My brethren, although I could speak with earnestness on this part of my subject, (for alas! I have had painful experience that men do, too often, put off the great business till they are dying,) I shall content myself with saying, that if the rule of judgment be considered, together with our Lord's answer in the text, there is but little encouragement for such hopes. To the agonized soul, trembling at the terrors of impending death, I would, as the minister of Christ, speak with tenderness and compassion; but I would, even then, deal faithfully: for if any thing is to be done in such an extremity, I feel persuaded it is not by concealing the truth or speaking smooth things; and while I would point to the all-sufficiency of Christ, I would yet endeavour to shew the great hazard which has been incurred. But oh! my brethren, do not peril your own souls so desperately as this—do not try your minister so painfully. **LIVE TO CHRIST, AND THEN TO DIE IS GAIN!** Live to Christ—live governed by faith and love to Him: that is the way to prepare for death—that is the way to prepare for judgment. At the hour of death you will want faith and hope to sustain you. Do not then, for the first time, have to seek them.

